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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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Con Ed Workers

Take the Power Back!



NEW YORK CITY, NY, July 18 — "While profits soar, Con Ed takes the food out of our children's mouths!" read the sign of one UWUA (Utility Workers' Union of America) Local 1-2 worker, locked out by the Consolidated Edison utility company. The bosses will continue to steal food from our families until workers bring forth a communist society, where we all get what we need.

Con Ed locked out their 8,500 workers and is using 5,000 managers as scabs.Con Ed had engineers teach contractors how to do the work two months before the lockout.

Workers Must Fight Back Against Scabs, Cops, Bosses

At the Rye, NY location, workers have physically stopped scab trucks from entering. Con Ed filed an injunction to prevent no more than four workers picketing at any single location and at a certain distance from the location.

Teamsters' drivers, who make truck deliveries to Con Ed, have refused to cross picket lines with four or more workers. On Sunday night, the workers stopped a delivery of an electrical transformer in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. This could lead to blackouts. There is no capital work going on; workers in Bensonhurst are still preventing the delivery of emergency generators.

The union made a call for all workers who were pregnant, on dialysis, on chemo or other such conditions to come out to Union Square in Manhattan. The next day, Con Ed gave back healthcare they took away two days into the lockout.

Unite Against Racist Cuts

PLP has been on the picket lines everyday since the lockout. In one picket location, several workers didn't want an anti-racist sign posted up on the police barricades and complained that the lockout had nothing to do with racism. A PL'er, the spouse of one of the workers, argued that the cuts Con Ed demanded were in fact racist since the greatest cuts came when the workforce became more black and Latino. The Con Ed workers weren't convinced and the comrade asked if the new workers don't deserve the same benefits as the traditionally Italian workers that dominated the workforce in decades past. Ashamed, the workers who opposed to the anti-racist sign allowed the PL'er to put it up. We still struggle with our friends to agree that these attacks are racist.

Many workers on the picket lines are convinced that following the rules and abiding by law is the right thing to do. When a PL'er said cops keep the workers out and scabs in, one worker insisted that the cops are only doing their jobs. When days later cops harassed workers about having a barbeque grill and sitting in the shade instead of being in the sun, the union stewards asked workers to oblige. But one worker protested, saying, "We didn't win pensions by following the law. Workers didn't get benefits by following the law. We had to fight for it." The bosses own the courts and kkkops. Relying on worker's power is our only winning strategy.

Gutting the Union

Con Ed is making record profits but they presented a contract to break the union: no guaranteed pension, lower wages and paying more for health benefits. Current employees would pay for their retirement by selling out new members who, after 30 years of service, will get a measly $800 monthly retirement benefit. Local 1-2 said no to this offer. Con Ed said the union needed to give two weeks notice if they wanted to strike. Local 1-2 said no.

When the ruling class can gut the pensions of some workers, all workers suffer. But this struggle is about more than just pay and benefits. It is a struggle for power.

Under capitalism the bosses have all the money and control the courts, cops and contracts. Capitalist competition forces bosses to get richer or go under. Ultimately, even if we "win" this contract fight, the bosses will attack us again, whether it's the current Con Ed CEO Burke or some other capitalist exploiter. But the bosses can't replace our labor! Workers can run the world without bosses but the bosses cannot live or get rich without us.

By fighting for more militancy, building a movement to destroy capitalism and develop workers power — communism — we can move forward, no matter what the outcome of this contract struggle.

The Only Long-Term Winning Strategy for Workers is Communism

The union has two sayings: "When we go out, the lights go out" and "Whatever it takes." It's the rank-and-file workers who will really show NY what these phrases mean by physically confronting management and scabs.

Ultimately, only communism can really be a future for the working class. By eliminating the profit motive, we would be able to improve crucial infrastructure, clean utilities (water, gas, electric) and make sure the only lights that go out are on the bosses.✪

STOP SCABS

The use of scabs is one of the bosses' most effective tools to break workers' strikes. On the other hand, historically the violent stopping of scabs by striking workers is one of their more effective weapons in winning strikes.

Many have pointed to President Reagan's firing of striking air controllers in 1981 and his hiring of 10,000 military air controllers to scab on the walkout as a turning point in accelerating the demise of the U.S. trade union movement. However, its downfall started long before that. Had the machinists' union refused to cross the strikers' picket lines, the entire airline industry would have been brought to a screeching halt. But the AFL-CIO didn't lift a finger to organize to stop the scabs and the bosses were able to continue operating and raking in their profits.

It was after that struggle that the media popularized the phrase "replacement workers" to try to nullify the hatred that workers had pinned on the word "scab." Workers recognized that those crossing picket lines were their enemies, enabling the bosses to maintain production and profits and outlast the strikers.

1877 National Railroad Walkout: Workers sent flaming locomotives into the roundhouses to rout the militia that had been ordered out to escort scabs into work to break the strike.

1892 New Orleans General Strike: Black and white workers united to shut the port and bar the bosses' use of scabs.

1919 Great Steel Strike: Communist leader William Z. Foster organized immigrant workers from 17 different countries to unite and shut down the mills, barring all scabs. Class consciousness can always defeat racism and nationalism.

1930s Auto Sit-down Strikes: Communist-led workers seized and occupied the plants and effectively prevented the bosses from using scabs. These strikes led to the unionizing of 4,000,000 industrial workers and the 40-hour week.

1963 Hazard, Kentucky, Miners' Wildcat Strike: Workers used guns and dynamite to stop scab mines from functioning.

1966 New York City Transit Strike: So tight a hold did the workers have on the mass transit system, the city bosses could not operate one subway train or bus.

The bosses' government's have always used the army and the cops to try to escort scabs into struck facilities, knowing that it could break the workers' ability to shut down production.

In the current Con Ed lockout/strike, the bosses have used the title of "manager" to employ 5,000 scabs to keep the utility operating. If the city's AFL-CIO had any working-class spirit left, it could call out tens of thousands of workers to surround the Con Ed plants and prevent the manager-scabs from performing the jobs normally done by the workers. But the unions' misleadership has long given up on that kind of action.

It is up to the rank and file to organize themselves to stop the scabs and to win support from rank and filers throughout the city to back them.✪

Rulers' Plan

National Service for War and Fascism

As imperialist rulers in the U.S. face sharpening global competition, especially as they shift to prepare for a potential war with China, they must deal with two related problems. The first is a military that is both expensive and inadequate. The second is a working class short on patriotism and reluctant to enlist in the bosses' warmongering quest to maintain their world empire.

Speaking for the dominant, finance-capital wing of the U.S. ruling class, Barack Obama's military and national security advisors have devised a scheme that combines a revived draft, forced labor at low wages, and rabid union-busting. Taken as a whole, it would lower workers' living standards while depositing even more profits into the banks and biggest corporations. Thomas Ricks, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), presented such a plan last week on the New York Times op-ed page (7/10/12). Ricks would present high school graduates with three options:

• Eighteen months in the military with low pay but "excellent" post-service benefits, including free college tuition [for those who survive a war];

• Civilian national service for a slightly longer period with similar low pay and future benefits;

• An opt-out for those willing to forfeit virtually all federal assistance for the rest of their lives.

Ricks thinks his plan could alleviate the so-called "Vietnam Syndrome," which has made workers unwilling to sacrifice themselves in the next U.S. conflict after the Vietnam War slaughtered 3.8 million Vietnamese and 58,000 GIs. (This "syndrome" is in fact a healthy, working-class aversion to furnishing the imperialists with cannon fodder.) He also hopes that forced, low-paid labor on a massive scale can help revive the U.S. capitalists' profit rate, which is plunging next to their Chinese archrivals.

Details of Ricks' plan are even more ominous than his core proposals. Beyond enlarging the U.S. military, he would make it more deadly. Draftees would remain stateside, freeing up the hardened, presumably more committed volunteer force for combat overseas. Of course, conscripts won to the Pentagon's "killer elite" brainwashing "could move into the professional force and receive weapons training."

National Service = Civilian Government Slavery

Those who don't choose the actual army could wind up "teaching in low-income areas, cleaning parks, rebuilding crumbling infrastructure" — all jobs that are now predominantly unionized in schools, parks and construction. Ricks' union-busting scheme would create a mass army of scabs and wipe out union workers' hard-earned gains for the benefit of U.S. bosses.

Like Scott Walker and Andrew Cuomo, the governors of Wisconsin and New York, Ricks targets workers he labels as "overpaid" public employees. All three ruling-class mouthpieces blame state and municipal workers for draining U.S. capitalists' profit margins and tying up funds better spent on imperialist wars.

"Imagine," gushes Ricks, "how much could be saved if a few hundred New York City school custodians were 19, energetic and making $15,000 plus room and board." They'd replace older workers who might earn three or four times that amount plus health benefits, vacations, and sick pay — won through decades of hard struggle — and who could now join the army of the unemployed. In addition, Ricks says, "much of the labor currently contracted out to the private sector could be performed by 18-year-olds for much less."

This overhaul would come down especially hard on black, Latino and immigrant working-class youth who are already at the bottom of the wage scale and suffer double the jobless rates of white workers, or worse. They would be even more super-exploited than they are now.

Ricks' opt-out clause essentially excommunicates workers who are swayed by the liberal imperialists' domestic political enemies. It is an implicit jab at libertarians (those opposed to virtually any government control), the Tea Party and others who are less than gung-ho about U.S. intervention abroad. "Those who declined to help Uncle Sam would in return pledge to ask nothing from him — no Medicare, no subsidized college loans and no mortgage guarantees. Those who want minimal government can have it."

In actuality, the children of the super-rich don't need these federal government supports. But everyone else would have a gun at their heads: "Choose" the militarized national service/draft, or opt out and get zilch.

No Unity Between Bosses and Workers

Liberal pundits and politicians (like Charles Rangel, the black congressman from Harlem) say an all-encompassing draft would foster class equality in the U.S. They also claim that it would make war less likely by putting the entire population at risk. By giving both rich and poor a stake in future wars, they say, politicians and the wealthy might think twice before endorsing such wars. But the answer for the working class is not uniting with rich kids for an equal opportunity to kill workers and youth in other countries and protect the U.S. rulers' profits. The answer is working-class unity to wage class war against the capitalist exploiters.

The push for "universal" service hides a darker, militarist motive. The late Charles Moskos, a military sociologist who helped create the fascist Hart-Rudman reports, wrote that a draft "that starts conscription at the top of the social ladder" would "raise acceptance of combat casualties" (United We Serve: National Service and the Future of Citizenship, Brookings Institution Press, 2003). Working-class youth would be more easily persuaded to go off to war in a more egalitarian military — a theory that ignores the fact that the rich have ways of avoiding combat not open to workers.

The payoff for the bosses would be huge. While he avoids mentioning China, a potential World War III foe that has more people of military age than the total U.S. population, Ricks salivates over the prospect of mobilizing an average school graduation army "of about four million."

While Obama's CNAS-influenced re-election team is clearly promoting Ricks' plan, Obama is unlikely to publically endorse it before the elec-

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Fascism on the March

Thomas Ricks, whose fascist scheme is outlined on this page, is no lone howling wolf. He speaks for the dominant wing of U.S. capitalists. At the Center for A New American Security (CNAS), he works under the think tank's president, Nathaniel Fick, and its chairman, Richard Danzig. Fick served as a military adviser to Obama's 2008 transition team. From 2007 through the 2008 election, Danzig counseled then-Senator Obama on national security issues. Michele Flournoy, CNAS founder, was Obama's defense undersecretary from 2009 to 2012. Ricks, Fick, Danzig, Flournoy and Obama all, in turn, answer to CNAS's arch-imperialist donors: Chevron, JP Morgan Chase, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Why do we call this a fascist scheme? Consider its elements: lowered wages and racist super-exploitation to expand bosses' profits; driving the unemployed into the military; union-busting and forced labor; increased racist police attacks on black and Latino youth with stop-and-frisk terror, gung-ho patriotic fervor against "foreign enemies."

All of these have their parallels in the program enforced by Hitler's Third Reich in the run-up to World War II. Nazi Germany gassed millions in their concentration camp ovens. The U.S. already employs mass incarceration, with black and Latino workers and youth representing 70 percent of those imprisoned in the world's largest prison system. But history tells us there is no reason to believe that the U.S. capitalists will stop there. They will go to any lengths to meet the challenge of a rising China in a competition for the world's vital resources, especially oil and gas.

Can World War III be far behind?

OUR FIGHT

✭Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✭Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✭Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✭While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✭Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. Everyone will share in society's benefits and burdens.

✭Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✭Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✭Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✭Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✭Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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Why Articles Are Not Signed

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual. While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

Road, Rail Blockades + Rockets

Spain: Striking Miners Rip Rulers' Austerity



MADRID, SPAIN, July 12 — A seven-week general strike of 8,000 miners in the northern coalfields of Austurias, Aragon and Léon protesting the Socialist government's austerity attacks has turned into a mass uprising reaching all the way to this capital. After having seen 40,000 jobs destroyed in the past 20 years and facing the potential extinction of another 40,000, the miners said "Enough!" They have fought daily battles with the hated Civil Guard.

Scores of miners have locked themselves into the pits. Strikers have erected burning barricades, blockaded 16 main highways, shut rail lines and used improvised rocket launchers in their response to the rioting cops' use of tear gas, clubs and rubber bullets. When special anti-riot squads of the military police tried to remove the barricades, the miners answered with dynamite. A Civil Guard terrorist invasion of a mining village using anti-riot gear against women, children and the elderly was routed by furious strikers and their families (see box). Their militant fight has inspired walkouts of transportation workers, teachers and shipbuilders.

The strikers have gone beyond the local Occupy movement's protesters (the "indignados") by shouting, "No estamos indignados, estamos hasta los cojones!" — "We are not indignant, we are pissed off to our balls!"

The uprising has drawn mass support from the working class which is suffering 25 percent unemployment — 52 percent among youth — a four percent sales tax on bread and medicine, and facing an increase to 21 percent on clothing and telephone charges. The strike was provoked by a government edict of a 63 percent cut in subsidies for the mining region, sales tax hikes, and an increase in the retirement age to 67, costing the working class 65 billion euros ($81 billion U.S. dollars) over the next 30 months — this all to bail out the bankers' toxic assets and loans resulting in the collapse of the real estate market.

On June 24, thousands of miners took their protest on an 18-day march for 250 miles straight to this capital city where they were hailed as heroes by a half million workers and their families. Escorted by the city's firefighters into the main square when they arrived at 2:00 AM, the crowds greeted the miners with raised fists, red flags, revolutionary chants of "Long live working-class struggle!" and the singing of the Internationale.

Support for their struggle has reached the British working class where the Spanish Miners Solidarity Committee was formed on June 11 in Sheffield, England by former veteran miners of the 1984-85 strike. They have organized a national campaign to send funds to the strikers' families in the northern and eastern coalfields.

The world's capitalist media — dwelling on Spain's need to bail out the bankers — has tried to keep this struggle out of the headlines as they did with the months-long strike of 300,000 students in Quebec. But the march to Madrid broke through this blackout.

The bosses' have smeared the miners with accusations of "terrorists" and lies about their wages and "early retirement." However, workers have not fallen for this garbage. When Spain's national soccer team won the Euro Cup recently, the ruling class created a mood of flag-waving national unity. But the thousands in Madrid's Puerto del Sol main square chanted to the miners, "Esta es mi selección" ("This is *my* national team!")

Spain's main unions have played their usual pro-capitalist role. After having called a short general walkout in March, they never followed up with a long-range mass strike. They are allied with the Socialist Party which has sponsored this anti-working-class austerity. But they cannot control the anger of the rank and file.

The miners are part of a long tradition of struggle against the ruling class, which has been an occupying force in the Asturias coal fields. The first general strike against the fascist Franco, in 1962, was initiated by the Asturias miners, who organized guerrilla actions against the regime. Solidarity among the miners is a part of their way of life and work as brothers and sisters dependent on one another in the mines.

To turn this class struggle into a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system — the source of these attacks on the working class — requires the leadership of a communist party, which unfortunately is lacking in Spain. But the building of such an organization through the Progressive Labor Party is occurring in many countries worldwide and inevitably will reach the workers of Spain.

Meanwhile, workers everywhere should applaud their struggle and follow the example of the miners in England by sending solidarity greetings and money to the miners in Spain, as well as picket the Spanish embassies to send a message that the workers of the world are one international class. We will unite against the capitalists wherever they attack us, and eventually drive them into the dustbin of history.✪

Workers' Power Wins the Day

On June 5, the Spanish Civil Guard arrived in force in the Asturias region to clear a roadblock erected by the striking miners on Highway N-630. But then the miners responded. They took up their shields and, supported by the whole population of the nearby village, they launched an assault on the Guard, driving them from the town center. In a veritable manhunt, they chased them through the residential areas and the surrounding countryside, driving them from the motorway to the edges of town, forcing them to abandon their attack.

Their flight was celebrated with long applause from the local population, expressing their solidarity with the miners' struggle.

Algeria: Workers Strike Phosphate Bosses

ANNABA, ALGERIA, July 12 — A strike by 250 phosphate company workers at the port installations here proves once again that nationalization of industry is just another form of capitalist exploitation and rule.

On June 5, 250 workers shut the Installations Portuaires de Annaba (IPA), a subsidiary of the Ferphos Group — one of many of Algeria's state-owned companies — and have blocked all exports since.

The workers are making the same demands they advanced in a 2011 strike which saw every company promise broken, including: changes in the wage scale plus a guaranteed bonus and promotions; rectifying working conditions which are endangering workers' lives due to collapsing tunnels; on-the-job illnesses involving dermatological and respiratory problems; and broken locomotives hauling the phosphate on run-down railroad tracks.

Six IPA strikers told the El Watan newspaper (7/9): "We've been on strike for over a month, and no official notice has been taken….Ferphos is a rich company. This wealth profits others and not us poor workers. In addition to the precarious wage situation that we're locked into, our working conditions are inhumane, worthy of slavery….Are we subhuman? In the eyes of our director…we are subhuman since he has not hesitated to use disrespectful and insulting words about us."

Algeria's state-run companies were the product of the overthrow of French colonial rule which ended 50 years ago (depicted in the famous film "Algiers"). While much was made of a national liberation movement freeing workers from the imperialist French bosses, the latter were merely replaced by local bosses who have run these nationalized industries in their own class interests.

In 2011, the Ferphos Group and its holding company had sales of nearly $100 million, from which they netted substantial profits. They made out like bandits by gaining a good share of the market because of the turmoil surrounding their three main Arab Spring rivals, Tunisia, Syria and Egypt. The slowdown of phosphate exports from those three countries — amounting to over six million tons — opened the way for Algerian phosphate.

But, of course, it was not the workers who profited from this, it was the Algerian state capitalists who continued to exploit the working class, leading to their two strikes. So with all the hoopla in the bosses' media about the Arab Spring "freeing" these workers of dictatorial rule, capitalist exploitation simply continues under the façade of nationalization.

Meanwhile, the union fakers are in cahoots with the bosses, fearing to even publicly back the strike because it might cost them their jobs as "union leaders." The rank and file can only depend on themselves, not these union traitors.

The only chance of the workers winning some of their immediate demands is by spreading the strike to all of Ferphos Group's subsidiaries and to all of the workers involved in the industry. Yet the real solution lies not in these nationalist movements nor in clerical rulers (like in Iran) but in a class revolution that destroys the profit system, its bosses who run it and their state apparatus that enforces it. That's communism, and requires the leadership of a communist party. Reaching these workers with that understanding is a task to which the Progressive Labor Party is dedicated.✪

International AIDS Conference: 'Turn the Tide with Communist Revolution!'

Over 30,000 people from around the world have gathered in Washington, DC, for the 19th International AIDS Conference, "Turning the Tide Together."

To *really* turn the tide, PLP'ers in the AIDS movement declare that an anti-racist, communist workers' revolution is required that includes and unites all parts of the global working class. The capitalist system continually reinforces and reproduces the conditions that cause AIDS and must be destroyed to secure a final victory against AIDS.

HIV And Racism

HIV disproportionately affects poor working class people around the globe, hitting hardest those oppressed by racism, sexism, poverty, and stigma because of sexual orientation and gender identities. In Washington, DC, 12 percent of African-American women live with HIV, and nearly half of young black gay men have HIV.

Many rank-and-file people, scientists and organizations have mobilized against HIV. PLP'ers have fought side by side with masses of people for prevention programs, affordable housing, needle exchanges, testing and treatment for all, and an end to discrimination against, and prosecutions of, drug users and women forced to sell their bodies. Yet the epidemic grows.

We invite you to join the PLP in smashing capitalism and its state and help create a new society without AIDS based on co-operation, equality and collective ownership and sharing of the world's resources.

Communism Can End the AIDS Epidemic

Capitalists only value workers for the profit to be extracted from them in production and consumption. They make profits by paying as little as possible and employing as few as possible to get the job done.

Millions of workers in the world economy, especially youth, have no jobs — from 52 percent youth unemployment in Spain to 24 percent in Egypt to almost 50 percent of young African-Americans living in Washington, DC's East-of-the-River neighborhoods. Immigrant workers similarly face intense exploitation worldwide, with low wages and high risks of deportation.

To maintain power, the capitalists and their politicians weaken our unity and militancy by using racism to stereotype and demean black, Latino, Asian and Arab workers in order to divide the entire working class. These stereotypes portray such workers as lazy and criminal. Politicians then use these lies to explain high rates of unemployment and imprisonment of African Americans in the U.S. and justify policies to cut services and benefits.

The bosses also brand people as immoral, dangerous, abnormal, or inferior to create further divisions. Such stigma pushes shame onto those who are, for example, poor, women, gay or transgender, imprisoned, mentally ill or HIV positive.

At the same time, the bosses' propaganda encourages the public to view them as not worthy of support. Stigma leads to high rates of HIV and AIDS as workers who are attacked for their conditions or identities are less likely to take care of themselves and their partners. Stigma, prejudice and discrimination are all about power — the power of the ruling class of bankers and corporations to keep people weak and divided.

Racist and sexist differences must be overcome. When the workers arm themselves with communist politics, there is enough strength to challenge, and overthrow, the bosses!

Capitalism often forces people into situations at high risk for HIV, violence and bad health in general. Some women and undocumented immigrants find no choice but to sell their bodies to support their families or to secure housing. Desperate, depressed workers sometimes self-medicate with illegal drugs, increasing risk as well.

We must unify all our brothers and sisters in the struggle against capitalism, racism and sexism. But the bosses teach us to use other people and only look out for number one. If we fall for this lie, we look at people in a "transactional" way — using friends and others to get what we need for our families and ourselves. Maybe someone sucks up to a boss for a promotion while ignoring the needs of co-workers. Others could trade sex or freedom for a place to stay, food to eat and protection for one's children.

When the workers arm themselves with communist politics, there is enough strength to challenge, and overthrow, the bosses!

Communism will drastically change people's relationships. Communism provides for everyone's needs and values everyone's contributions to the building of a new society based on shared ownership of the world's resources. There is no wage system to create a hierarchy of class differences. Without profit, the working class can plan what to produce based on human needs and solve such problems as housing for all and global warming.

How Can We Win A Communist World?

We need to become part of an anti-racist, revolutionary organization that promotes multiracial unity and militant action — the Progressive Labor Party. We must fight the fascist systems that the rulers impose to solve their crises, and not settle for another capitalist politician.

Resolutions, human rights treaties, NGO activity and voting do not change the class that holds power. Building unity among workers worldwide helps prepare us to take power. Revolutions against ruling classes brought the working class to power for decades in the Soviet Union and China.

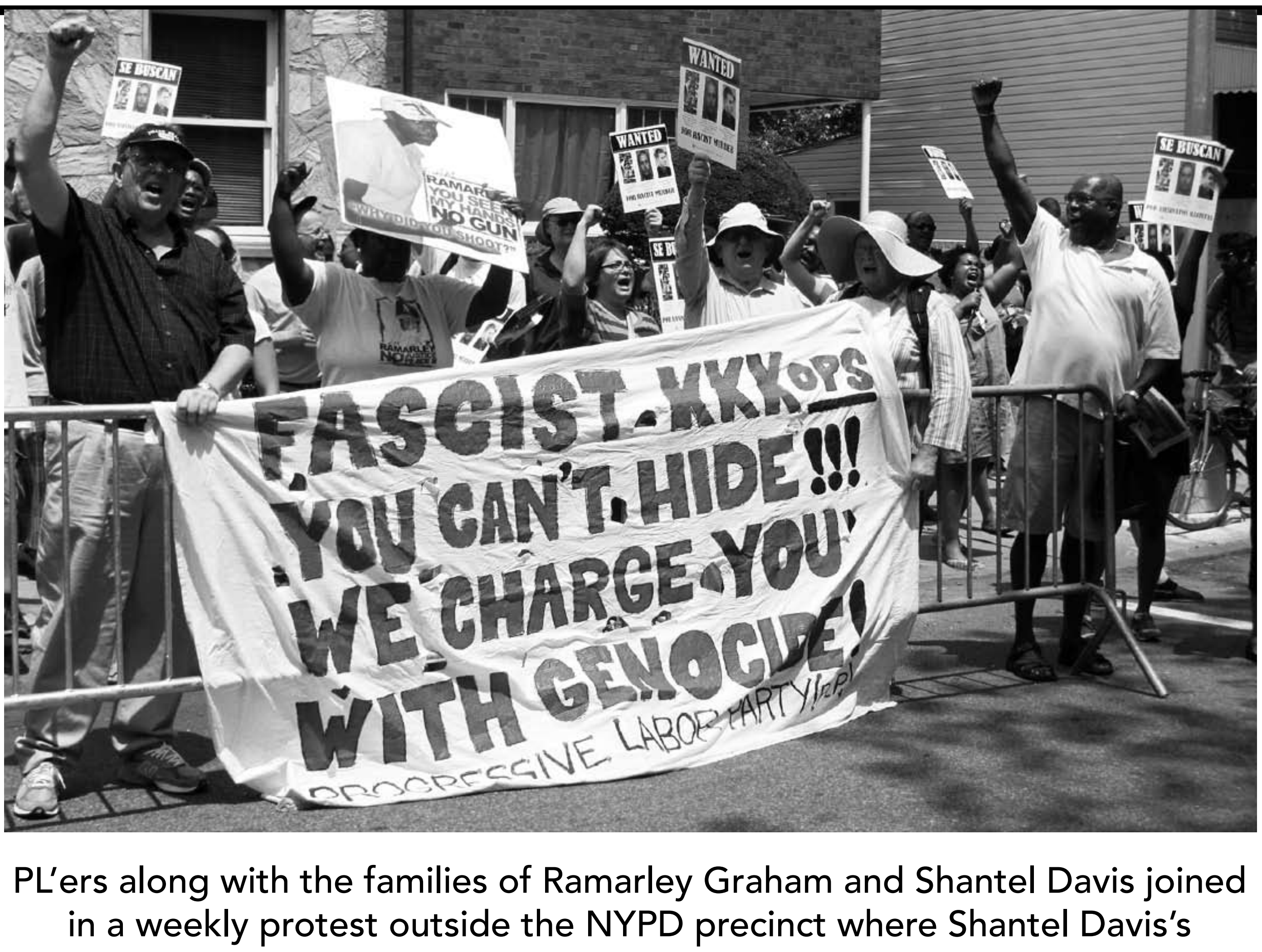
While these countries have re-established capitalism and a new exploitative boss class, those earlier revolutions and decades of workers' power showed our potential to create a new, egalitarian healthy world.

Elections provide no change, only an illusion of power. Liberal politicians like Obama, just like McCain or Romney, serve the bosses, as he demonstrated with bank bailouts, a slap in the face to laid-off, foreclosed workers, annual deportations of 400,000 immigrants, expanded wars, and drone murders. Obama still manages to mislead and pacify people who believe his rhetoric and ignore his policies.

The Progressive Labor Party fights racism and sexism. We build for the overthrow of capitalism and seek to create a communist world. We can only succeed with the dedication and commitment to equality and communist principles by millions of people worldwide.

The struggle against the HIV epidemic already reflects many of these communist principles. Activists have never given up the fight to extend prevention and care to the millions living in the U.S. and other countries. They have embraced people who the capitalists ignore and marginalize.

Such impulses must lead to a commitment to the world's working class to establish a new system — communism. Join the Progressive Labor Party and help organize a world without AIDS.✪



PL'ers along with the families of Ramarley Graham and Shantel Davis joined in a weekly protest outside the NYPD precinct where Shantel Davis's murderer is stationed.

France: Bosses Cheer Socialists' Austerity Against Workers

PARIS, July 11 — France's new Socialist government has lost no time changing from Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde. New austerity measures will come hard and fast in dealing with capitalism's crisis which essentially will be to tax the workers — suffering a 17.3 percent unemployment rate — to help the rich. A combination of tax hikes mainly on the working class, wage freezes, pension cuts and reducing employer contributions to the social security system all will help the bosses maintain profits and competitiveness. And the union leaders will play a leading role in selling this to the working class.

Taxes, Cuts Hit Workers

One of newly elected President François Hollande's main advisors said, "We can't wait any longer…. We have to strike hard right from this summer, when the law rectifying the 2012 budget is voted; and this autumn, when the 2013 budget is voted….to drive home the nail by increasing taxes and really cutting expenditures."

Between now and 2013 the government must come up with 40 billion euros (USD $50 billion) to keep France's promise to the European Union to bring the budget deficit down to 3%. On July 4, 7.2 billion euros (USD $9 billion) in additional taxes were announced, 53 percent of which will fall on households.

In 2013, the government plans to increase the generalized social contribution (CSG) from its present 7.5 percent by another two to four percent. Rich and poor pay the same rate to the CSG — which finances the social security system — so workers will pay several hundred additional euros annually in CSG. All this increases the income gap between rich and poor, increasing the power of the capitalist class.

This tax increase could generate 20 to 40 billion euros in revenues, reducing the government budget deficit and ensuring that France can pay back its $87.9 billion sovereign debt to the capitalists — with interest.

Meanwhile, reducing employer contributions to worker's social security means taxpayers (mainly workers) will make up the difference via the CSG tax. French bosses will use this cut in labor cost in two ways: a combination of lowering the cost of production, increasing their competitiveness on the world market and increasing their rate of profit.

President Hollande is "reconsidering" his pre-election promise to raise the income tax rate on millionaires, which probably means junking it.

Still, all this won't be enough to reduce the government budget deficit, leading to more budget cuts in 2014-2017. The Socialists will continue the freeze on government expenditures (except for financing the sovereign debt and retirement pensions).

Freeze Wages, More Lay-offs

Other foreseeable measures include a freeze on government workers' wages and on government financing of universities, research institutes and the unemployment agency and layoffs of government workers, resulting in "blood on the walls of the ministries" said one minister.

The Socialists also intend to cut pensions. The last two "reforms" raised the retirement age. Only 60% of workers aged 55-59 are actually working. Raising the retirement age for many workers means increasing the time they spend on unemployment or welfare before they retire, and lowering the pension they get when actually retiring.

Meanwhile, the economic crisis continues unabated. In May, 17.3 percent of the active population was unemployed or underemployed, including part-timers looking for full-time work and other categories of the jobless. This falls most heavily on immigrant black and Arab workers from Africa who, because of racist discrimination, suffer even lower wages and higher joblessness.

In this dire situation, the sellout union leaders will be fronting for the ruling class, selling the austerity to the working class. "We're on a new course!" exclaimed Bernard Thibault, leader of the CGT, France's largest union. All the union misleaders are struggling for a place on the government bandwagon. (The Socialists made a show of listening to the union leaders but carefully avoid discussion of any unpopular measures.)

Union Hacks Dance to Bosses' Tune

Different union leaders were assigned the role of "officially" putting forward Socialist proposals, especially increasing the CSG tax as the "only acceptable way to go." In payment, they'll get two carrots: Union officials will be paid to sit on the newly created General Commissariat for Forecasting, and union officials who are government employees will get a civil service promotion when they retire from union activity.

The whole capitalist election circus has enabled French bosses to continue to impose their policies. Indeed, with their "popular mandate" and the support of the union hacks, the "lesser-evil" Socialists can push through austerity measures even more severe than the worn-out Sarkozy government could ever have done.

Austerity policies and tax hikes are inevitable under capitalism, which staggers from one crisis of over-production to another. For workers, communist revolution is the only road to a decent life.✪

Communist Revolution the Solution

Paraguay: Landowners' Coup Seizes Power

NEW YORK CITY, July 6 — PLP rallied today in front of the Paraguayan embassy, in solidarity with the thousands of workers and farmers marching in the capital city of Asuncion. We condemned the parliamentary coup by the big landowners of Paraguay and their U.S. imperialist backers. PLP noted that Fernando Lugo, the ousted president, had never been a friend of the working class despite his progressive rhetoric. It will take communist revolution to change the grinding racist exploitative system in Paraguay, not liberal reform or a version of Hugo Chavez's "21st century socialism."

The opportunist Liberal Party and the fascist Colorado Party united to oust President Ferdinand Lugo, a former bishop who campaigned as the friend of farmers and workers. His election four years ago ended a vicious 40-year rule by the landlord-dominated Colorado Party. He was part of the reform movement in Latin America associated with the Bolivarian movement, including the reform leadership of Venezuela, Bolivia, and Brazil. In response to the coup, Brazil, Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela have recalled their ambassadors and refuse to recognize the new government. The U.S. jumped to support the new regime.

Why a coup? For the ruling class, Lugo was not aggressive enough in fighting a new guerilla movement — Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP) the Paraguayan People's Army — which has allegedly engaged in bombings, political murders and high profile kidnappings in support of landless peasants in Paraguay. The bosses did not want to hear about any kind of land reform either.

About two weeks ago, farmers occupied the land of a right-wing caudillo (leader) in the town of Curuguaty. The police were sent in to remove the squatters and a gun battle broke out. Sixteen people died including both police and farmers. Lugo was accused of negligence in the deaths and the Liberal Party and Colorado Party seized on the event to launch impeachment proceedings. Many forget to mention that several years ago under Colorado President Nicanor Duarte Frutos, over 400 died in the Ycua Bolanos Supermarket fire, when the managers locked the doors.

Battle of Ideas within the Movement

Many leaders, students and workers felt that the "Big Front" (Frente Guazu) of four years ago that brought Lugo to power would deal a blow to the ruling class and mean change, progress and a step towards socialism. For the past seven years, PL'ers have distributed CHALLENGE to many of these activists, trying to spread the message that these reform electoral alliances would inevitably sell out to the oligarchy for a piece of the pie and betray the working class, as has happened. PLP warned that elections in the capitalist system were not the way towards liberation. And so it has come to pass. Lugo did little, if anything, for the working class, yet the bosses were still not satisfied and put in their preferred puppet.

Lugo is vowing to create an alternative government; the people are in the streets and will struggle until presidential elections in April. Then, Lugo's alliance mostly made up of workers, unions, farmers and several parties including the pro-Chavez PMAS (Party Moving Towards Socialism) are supporting a former journalist and morning talk show host Mario Ferreiro. This candidate only recently claimed to be a socialist, and will undoubtedly follow the same opportunist path as Lugo.



PL'ers rally in solidarity with workers and farmers of Paraguay.

Workers and farmers must stand by the line that no socialist alliance with capitalists will bring workers in Paraguay the bread and freedom they need. Only communist revolution can move the working class forward with the complete destruction of the capitalist system — no trace of wages, capitalist electoral circuses, Bolivarian alliances, or ties to the bosses of China, Russia, the European Union or MERCOSUR (the South American bloc). Building PLP in Paraguay and fighting uncompromisingly for a communist workers' state can succeed in our genuine liberation from capitalism and imperialism.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

PLP Women Lead, Party Grows in South Asia

To add to recent discussions on cultural obstacles to overcoming sexism and recruiting women to PLP in areas where women are severely oppressed, it's encouraging to learn about how working-class women were recruited in one South Asian country.

It happened during a so-called natural disaster, made worse by capitalist greed. Thousands of people became homeless, including some members of the Party. For almost two years they lived in tents during the freezing winters that followed. Reconstruction money that poured into the area from the government, overseas organizations and individual donors, was being diverted into the pockets of national and local officials. It was also gobbled up by NGO's with expensive operating costs.

Little was going to the victims until the Party organized a fight demanding funds to rebuild homes. It was a strenuous struggle, lasting several months, carried out in difficult living conditions. But eventually the community's militant actions resulted in a distribution of building materials and financial aid for reconstruction.

During the months of demonstrations and confrontation with the authorities, the Party built ties within the community and recruited new members. In one family females and males joined. This was not an easy task in a society where unrelated men and women cannot mix freely, although less rigidly imposed for bourgeois, educated women. The reason for the success in recruiting women can be found in the anti-sexist politics of the leaders and their commitment to making women equal partners in the struggle.

A female comrade, helped the women — housewives and low-paid workers who'd lived lives conforming to custom — to overcome their fears of stepping outside traditional female roles and become activists.

Most important was educating male members about the role sexism plays under capitalism in maintaining ruling class domination of both men and women and the importance of the full inclusion of women in building a communist society.

One of the women recruited in the struggle went on to organize other working-class women in a fight against the local utilities company when a rise in the cost of electricity added hardship to their lives.

Out of these struggles two Party clubs were formed, run by women, surreptitiously attended by men. Today there are more clubs where men and women both take part.

What happened in this region underscores how culture is a capitalist concept that serves to reinforce the class system with women at the bottom of the heap. Their unpaid labor in the home and super exploitation in the lowest-paying jobs outside maintain the profits of the ruling class. When the stereotypes are challenged by communist ideas of equality, women break away from customary behavior and play an essential role in building an egalitarian society.

There are other examples from this part of the world; after the Russian revolution, thousands of women in the Muslim states gathered in the streets to throw off their burkas, the symbol of their repression. In nearby Afghanistan, women were a significant force during the growth of a Marxist movement and government in the 70's and 80's.

Worldwide, sexism hinders the growth of a powerful working-class movement. PLP recognizes that the fight against sexism is inseparable from the fight against capitalism and makes it primary along with racism in building the Party.

Anti-sexist fighter

'One Day Longer, One day Stronger!' — Rally vs. Hospital Layoffs

At the June 28 rally at Downstate Hospital to stop layoffs, CHALLENGE interviewed a rally speaker.

Q. There were hundreds of workers and community rallying. Is this enough to stop the layoffs?

A. Possibly not this time, but we have made an impact. We showed there is a working class-force to be considered and that new leaders are stepping forward. Each of the 500 participants has hundreds of friends that will become involved. An impromptu chant was picked up loudly and enthusiastically that showed hope for the future, that we will last and grow, "One Day Longer, One Day Stronger." This is an important beginning.

Q. What lessons have you learned from this?

A. An important lesson is that ordinary determined workers with a vision can organize against the layoffs and Downstate's closing; We needed to do something besides writing letters to the governor. We needed to show solidarity between all the unions and job categories and to express our anger over this racist attack. Many different workers organized for this: nursing assistants, community people, unit clerks, doctors, housekeepers, students, clerical staff, computer programmers, clinical assistants, nurses and absolutely no sellout politicians.

Imagine the result if any one of the unions and their parent organizations (like CSEA [Civil Service Epleyees Association] with its 200,000) had thrown themselves wholeheartedly behind us. We could have had not 500 but 50,000. Then we could encircle the hospital and grow until layoffs are stopped and the governor finds the money our community needs.

Q. Governor Cuomo says there is no money; how do you respond?

A. Many speakers exposed this lie. Cuomo has plenty of money for his banker and investor friends. When he talks of budget deficit this only applies to workers' salaries. Cuomo has intentionally cut Medicaid to Brooklyn hospitals and he reimburses double the amount to Manhattan Hospitals. Cuomo has done nothing to stop Federal aid cuts, aid that now goes to make war, to build drones and missiles.

Cuomo has supplied millions and billions to private contractors and bankers, (see NY Times exposé "Committee to Save NY"). These bankers and investors like Stephen Berger and Stanley Brezenoff and JP Morgan's Jamie Dimon write state health policy to benefit their class and remove our jobs and vital services. Two years ago the State attached a private hospital, Victory Memorial, (bankrupted through the usual corruption) to Downstate. Budget problems for Downstate then accelerated, partly because a 10-year $100-million lease for Victory was signed with bank fees plus interest that will probably mean over $200 million for a nearly empty structure.

Q. There were 400 CHALLENGEs distributed at the rally, Were there any other media reports on the event?

A. No other media, even though a press advisory was sent to all the press. This lack of media coverage of fight-back seems to be part of their plan to keep us workers in the dark about events important to us. That is why so few in the community know that this vital hospital which serves 75,000 ER visits a year may close. Having CHALLENGE report on our actions helps our struggle.

CHALLENGE: The working class thanks you for your efforts showing workers will take action against injustice and that around the world workers are understanding that a system that can't provide health care must be destroyed, and we can rebuild a world that serves all workers: a communist world.

Red Hospital Worker

Profiling: Capitalist Tool

At the Harlem anti-racist march (CHALLENGE, 7/4) I was asked for an inteview at 110th street. The following is a general description of the discussion between the interviewer (I) and myself, a CHALLENGE seller (CS):

I: Your sign says, "If You See That Capitalist Kills, Say Something!" What is its meaning and why are you marching?

CS: I'm here to support our children who are being terrorized, dehumanized and murdered because the capitalist bosses know that their racist profit system has no future for our youth and are trying to force them into being cannon fodder for their imperialist wars. These bosses still fear the national anti-racist rebellions of the 1960s in dozens of cities and neighborhoods like Harlem. In Los Angeles alone there was one billion dollars of property damages and ended only after two army divisions were recalled from Vietnam.

I: Were you ever racially profiled?

CS: Yes, as a youth (white) in the 1950s I demonstrated for Civil Rights legislation like anti-lynch and anti-poll tax laws (on black voters) and was threatened with arrest many times for being in cars with black people or even staying with them at hotels which hosted Civil Rights conventions.

I: So you've been against racism for a long time?

CS: Yes, I recall with disgust my Catholic priest describing to our class that the Jewish boys from the synagogue across the street were part of a religion that murdered "our lord" which led to violence. I remember a boss who threatened my factory job because I was disgracing the white "race" by letting black and Latino people outwork me. I remember a landlord threatening to rent to black people if we refused a rent increase. The capitalist bosses use racism, sexism and religion all over the world to divide workers and to steal trillions in profits from the wage differentials. I was called a "dirty communist" and threatened with lifetime blacklisting [job ban] for trying to organize a union in a sweatshop with unsafe conditions. I didn't even know what a communist was then but I quickly learned that any worker who threatened bosses' profits was profiled as a communist, so I guess I was a communist.

I: Are you a communist now?

CS: Yes, and this CHALLLENGE newspaper fights to destroy capitalism and racism and describes how our Progressive Labor Party is organizing a revolutionary movement for a communist system that abolishes wages, money and profits and works collectively to build a worker-run society.

A Comrade

National Service

continued from page 2

tion. He knows that Senator John Kerry's calls for national service cost him public support in the 2004 presidential election. Obama needs to maintain the U.S. rulers' scam of the "lesser evil" — that no matter how bad things may look under his administration, the Republicans' Mitt Romney would be worse. But all the "lesser-evil" Democrats elected in the past 50 years, from John F. Kennedy to Bill Clinton, have wound up establishing the very policies for which they bashed their Republican rivals.

In fact, Obama has pushed U.S. imperialism beyond what George W. Bush ever dared. He has expanded the Afghan war by 30,000 additional troops. He has effectively invaded Pakistan with U.S. Army Special Forces, bombings, and CIA drone killings. He has escalated the regional war in the Middle East in Yemen, Somalia and Libya and ratcheted up attacks on Iran while fortifying U.S. bases in and around Iraq. Domestically, Obama has deported far more immigrants than Bush ever dreamed of while expanding government spying on millions in the U.S. He has cynically executed all of these racist, fascist, and murderous policies behind the façade that his Democrats are "the workers' party."

But the Progressive Labor Party says: Evil, yes; lesser, no!

Today our Party can build on working-class revulsion to killing and dying for Uncle Sam/ExxonMobil. By bringing communist politics into the mass organizations where we belong and injecting our ideas into the class struggle, we can win workers and youth to see the fight for communist revolution as the only alternative to the horrors of capitalism. In that way we can build a mass PLP, the essential weapon to destroy the bosses and their profit system and usher in a world run by and for workers.✪

Obama's Executive Order: Trap for Workers



Once again, U.S. President Obama has made an empty promise to undocumented workers and their families. It can prove to be a dangerous, vicious trap. As CHALLENGE reported, Obama took an "executive action," declaring that certain undocumented immigrants will be given "deferred action" status for two years. In order to qualify, the person has to be 30 years old or younger; have been brought here before age 16 by an undocumented parent; have lived in the U.S. for more than 5 years; and graduated from high school or gotten a GED or been in the military. Also, qualification depends on not having any conviction greater than an "insignificant" misdemeanor. All applicants will be fingerprinted and subject to FBI checks.

If approved, a driver's license and work will be permitted, but that's all. Obama made it clear that this program will not lead to anyone getting a green card or citizen status. At the end of two years, one will have to reapply. There will be no process for appeal if the local immigration officer denies the application.

What Obama didn't say when he announced his plan is that because this is an "executive action," he can change his mind at any time and just take it away, as can any future president. Within days of Obama's announcement, Congressman Quayle of Arizona already introduced legislation to block this program.

The viciousness of Obama's racist program is that it holds a very tempting carrot out to young people who are desperately trying to survive. But that carrot is rotten, for it exposes that young person and their family members to the trap of unwittingly being caught for deportation. A young person registering for the program will have to disclose his or her address. Any undocumented family members living there will have no protections, and can be swept up immediately for deportation. In addition, if the program is ended at any point, the government will have the names and addresses of all of these people who are "illegal" once again. This is the very trap that awaited Haitian immigrants who were eligible for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) after Haiti's earthquake. Mindful of this, few of them signed up for that program.

The other viciousness lies in the fact that right now this program is just an announcement. There is no policy, no regulations, no forms to be filled out, no training for how to carry it out. This too, happened once before with Obama and the consequences have been dramatic.

Last year, racist Obama announced a new policy — the government would only deport people who had prior deportation orders or who had committed crimes. Many people, immigration lawyers included, got very excited. Yet, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) is still deporting people who have no prior deportation orders or criminal convictions.

When challenged, ICE said (1) they were still going by the old policy as they had not yet, even nine months after the policy was announced, been given direction as to how to implement it; and (2) they considered that anyone who was here without documentation was committing a crime! It is clear that Obama is willing to make grand, idle, vicious promises to people, knowing that they will not be carried out and will pose a great danger to anyone who trusts his announcements. Overmore, it is a victim-approved fascist trap for undocumented workers.

The reality is that the ruling class is desperate for young people to serve as bodies for their imperialist wars. Colonel Margaret Stock, an immigration attorney who served at West Point, said that the military is eager for the Dream Act because immigrant children are perfect soldiers. They are compliant with orders, don't complain and don't cause trouble.

Imperialist warmonger Obama is doing Colonel Stock one better. He has announced a trap that will both steer young immigrants into the military (because even if they are able to get protection under his program, most won't be able to find jobs), and get names and addresses of their undocumented families who he and future presidents can round up and deport.

A system that can't provide for the well-being of all does not deserve to exist. We must continue our fight for communist revolution, for only then will people not be categorized as "legal" and "illegal." Only then will workers be guaranteed work to live their lives as truly productive, creative human beings. Smash all borders, Workers of the World Unite!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Apartheid stays; ANC self-serves

NYT,6/27 — During apartheid…whites lived in plush seaside enclaves whereas blacks and mixed race people lived in ugly townships and shacks. Whites owned almost all the businesses, and had access to the best jobs, health care and schools….

"Eighteen years after the end of apartheid, not much has changed," said Maurencia Gillion, a local politician who grew up and still lives in Overstrand [the black ugly township mentioned above].

"The rich white people still live in their beautiful holiday homes," Ms. Gillion said. "The rest are in slums in squatter areas. Even after 18 years, in reality apartheid remains…."

"The structure of the apartheid economy has remained largely intact," [President] Zuma said, in a speech to…A.N.C.'s policy conference…. "The ownership of the economy is still primarily in the hands of white males…."

With unemployment at 25 percent and much higher for young blacks, and corruption widespread…the A.N.C. has become the party of a small black elite interested only in its own enrichment…

The A.N.C.…has largely backed a free-market economy.

Big biz makes its own rules

NYT, 6/10 — [Decades] from now, historians sweltering away in an overheated planet and looking bck to our own times will surely [blame] multinational oil companies….They're re-shaping today's world…by searching for…oil and gas in ever more riskier places; beneath oceans, in Canadian tar sands, in underground rock formations that require "fracking" and in the environmentally fragile Arctic waters newly accessible as the polar ice cap shrinks….

In the first half of last year Exxon Mobil's profits were $21.3 billion….It's a…corporation so large and powerful — operating in come 200 nations and territories — that it really has its own foreign policy….

After the Valdez [oil spill] a company representative quietly called a University of Wisconsin professor to offer money if he would write an article for a "respectable academic journal," arguing against punitive damages. This man spoke up, but we don't know how many other scholars received, and may have acted on, the same offer and said nothing.

Arab spring shows need for reds

GW, 7/6 — Even before the Egyptian army's latest power grab, optimism about the Arab uprisings had reached a low ebb. For many the "Arab spring" has long since turned into an Arab winter, as savage repression…crushed, hijacked or diverted popular pressure for democratic rights and social justice.

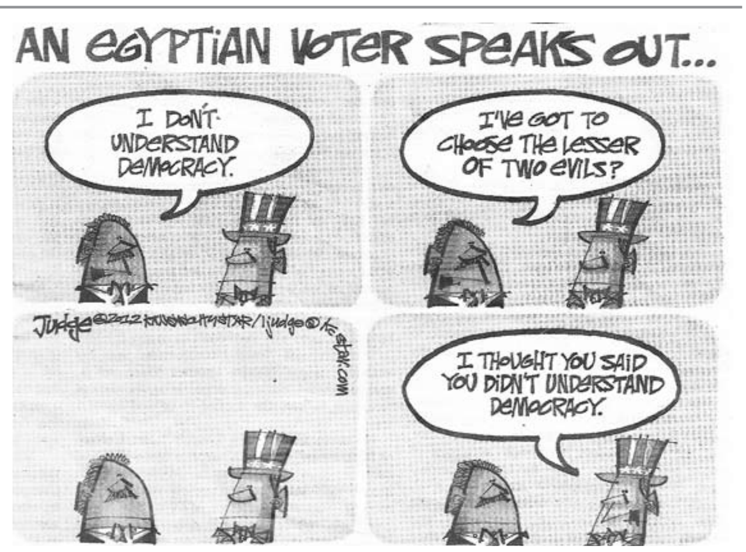
Foreign intervention left Libya in chaos, Syria is engulfed in sectarian war, Yemen has been fobbed off with cosmetic change while the United States escalates drone attacks and protest continues to be brutally put down from Bahrain to Saudi Arabia….

A new kind of immigrant fence?

GW, 7/6 — Migrants applying for a UK passport will soon have to recite the first verse of God Save the Queen under an overhaul of the UK citizenship test this autumn. They could also be tested on their knowledge of Winston Churchill, William Shakespeare and the Beatles….

Capitalism drives sales of body parts

NYT, 6/29 — BELGRADE, Serbia — Pavle Mircov and his partner, Daniella, nervously scan their e-mail in-box every 15 minutes, desperate for economic salvation: a buyer wiling to pay nearly $40,000 for one of their kidneys.



The couple, parents of two teenagers, put their organs up for sale on a local online classified site six months ago after Mr. Mircov, 50, lost his job at a meat factory here. He has not been able to find any work, he said, so he has grown desperate…. Telephone service has been cut off. One meal a day of bread and salami is the family's only extravagance.

"When you need to put food on the table, selling a kidney doesn't seem like much of a sacrifice," Mr. Mircov said.

Facing grinding poverty, some Europeans are seeking to sell their kidneys, lungs, bone marrow or corneas….

In Spain, Italy, Greece and Russia, advertisements by people peddling organs — as well as hair, sperm and breast milk — have turned up on the Internet with asking prices for lungs as high as $250,000….

"Organ trafficking is a growth industry….Organized criminal groups are preying upon the vulnerable on both sides of the supply chain: people suffering from chronic poverty, and desperate and wealthy patients who will do anything to survive."

The main supply countries had traditionally been China, India, Brazil and the Philippines. But experts say Europeans are increasingly vulnerable….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

AFT: Unity with Students and Parents Only Way to Fight Bosses' Racist Attacks

School systems across the globe serve two related purposes: an economic goal of churning out the next generation of workers to exploit, and the political purpose of building loyalty to the capitalist system. The teacher unions worldwide accept this two-fold mission and the attacks on students it requires. These unions are part of the problem, not the solution!

Capitalist school systems are giant sorting mechanisms that absorb, train, rank and spit out millions of young people each year. From the supposedly great school systems of Finland or Shanghai to the pits of racist neglect in Detroit, this relentless labeling and ranking of our youth — each one of whom is brimming with potential — maintains a "tight" labor market at every skill level, from fast food to PhDs. As a result of this forced competition, fear becomes the rule on the job. Fight-back all but vanishes.

Under communism, the masses will be liberated from the terrorizing prospect of unemployment and the drudgery of wage slavery, and also from capitalism's dream scenario, the "career." Communist work develops a diverse set of capacities within each individual in its aim to meet society's needs, with a mix of mental and manual labor for all. It is work motivated by social, not material, incentives.

Communist education means a lifetime of socially meaningful learning, both in and out of the classroom. We have seen glimpses of this kind of work and education when workers held power in Russia and China. It is just the opposite of what now prevails throughout the world.

Education Reform: Why Now?

The bosses' assault against students and teachers in the United States has reached epic proportions. The capitalists are using standardized curricula and tests for more direct control over what is taught. They attack wages and conditions for school workers even as they blame teachers and their students for the system's decay. In large and overcrowded urban districts, where students are predominantly black and Latino, dress codes, rigid discipline, and metal detectors are the norm. Students are treated like criminals, with no time off for good behavior.

In this climate, terrorized teachers help the bosses lay an ideological foundation for intensified fascism. It's now the norm to intimidate and militarize youth for the inevitable broader wars against the bosses' surging imperialist rivals like China. The U.S. rulers use the schools to protect their profits and shore up their dominant but declining position in an increasingly competitive world economy.

Both the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, which contain 30 percent of all U.S. union members, have willingly collaborated with the bosses in the new evaluation systems.

The leaders of these organizations are loyal to the capitalists, not to the workers. Writing for the Council of Foreign Relations, finance capital's most influential think tank, Joel Klein and Condoleezza Rice worried that more than 75 percent of U.S. students are unqualified to enter the military. (Klein is the former chancellor of the New York City public schools; Rice was George W. Bush's national security adviser.)

As competition heats up with China, Japan, Russia and the European powers, the U.S. needs to be able to field a competent mass army. The billionaires' true concern is not quality education, but preparation for imperialist war. It's no coincidence that Obama's education reforms include the reestablishment of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs at a number of colleges.

Trillions for War, Zero for Schools

The bosses' economic crisis and the trillions sunk into Afghanistan and Iraq have led to a wave of racist budget cuts and layoffs in public schools throughout the U.S. The results have been devastating.

• In New York City, the graduation rate hovers around 60 percent. Most graduates require remedial work before they can take college-level courses.

• In Philadelphia, under state stewardship for nearly a decade, district officials estimate it would take until 2123 to get all students up to grade level in reading and math.

• In Detroit, fire marshals have responded to complaints of kindergarten classes of 53 children. In the upper grades, district rules allow for as many as 61 students per class.

In recent memory, nobody has attacked education workers worse than Barack Obama and Arne Duncan, Obama's Secretary of Education. Supported by billionaires like Bill Gates and Eli Broad, Obama and Duncan are now pushing for an all-out emphasis on "teacher quality."

In fact, teacher evaluations are based mostly on student performance in standardized testing, where the margin of error is so high, they are statistically useless. But as the bosses' political tool, the evaluations are invaluable. They give the rulers easy scapegoats for the failure of their schools: "bad teachers" and the unions that "protect" them.

Strikes: Schools for Communism

Short of revolution, nothing demonstrates the power of the workers like a strike. A strike opens up the potential for teachers' union members to feel their power and build multi-racial unity of the parents, students, and school workers against the capitalists who control society. A strike of education workers can be a great opportunity for a militant, united, anti-racist fight against the children's exploiters who run the school system. Class struggle has erupted in the form of school sit-ins and disrupted policy meetings in New York, Oakland, Kansas City and more over the past year.

Chicago teachers are leading the way in opposing anti-student education reform with a bold strike authorization vote. A pro-student strike in Chicago would be an important advance in the class struggle. Push the AFT to support a strike in Chicago! Push a strike in Chicago to unite with students and parents to break the bosses' laws! Shut the schools and shut them tight!

But in every struggle against racist education reform, teachers must aim for more than a return to schools that perpetuate illiteracy and peddle lies. Only a communist revolution led by Progressive Labor Party can smash capitalism and organize society for the workers. Only communism can allow students to flourish in schools designed to meet their needs.✪

Anti-Racists Rock NEA Convention



WASHINGTON DC, July 5 — Teachers and students from the East Coast attended the largest teachers union convention in the U.S., the National Education Association (NEA). We had two demonstrations inside the convention hall and with help from delegates inside the different committee/caucus meetings presented resolutions calling on teachers to stand with their students against the re-segregation of the public schools and the racist budget cuts that primarily hurt students.

We received a warm reception from many with comments like, "Keep up your good job! Excellent work! I'm so glad you guys are here!"

Over 1,700 CHALLENGEs were distributed along with thousands of daily leaflets examining issues from the role of the Democrats in ushering in fascism to analyzing the phony "school reforms."

One of our demonstrations took place after one of our resolutions supporting the student strike in Canada against tuition increases was raised to the union delegate assembly.

In the English Language Learners (ELL) Caucus we led a struggle to get the union to take a stand against the racist cutbacks for ELL/bilingual programs. The state of Nevada has cut all funding for ELL students and done away with bilingual education. The caucus called on the NEA to reaffirm its commitment to funding for ELL students.

During discussions in the caucus we began the struggle with other teachers to view this fight as part of a racist attack on all students. Although we were unable to win the battle to include this language, we were able to make contacts and get to know some of the members better.

One thing was clear: many teachers and education workers are hungry for an answer to the crumbling school system and are open to our communist ideas.✪

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